

JOYCEVILLE
INDUSTRIAL
PILOT PROJECT

47299

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

Phase one of a new
approach to inmate
employment.

A NEW APPROACH TO INMATE EMPLOYMENT

The choice was simple. Let inmate employment continue to be a passive patchwork and inefficient arrangement or go all out to establish a realistic and viable system of penitentiary industries that would truly prepare inmates to cope with the pressures and pace of commercial industry.

The answer was obvious and the new industrial program is under way. Joyceville is the site of Phase One, a pilot plant that will manufacture metal products such as shelving, lockers, storage cabinets and lateral filing cabinets for federal government departments.

When the Joyceville pilot factory proves successful, the new industrial program will be established over a 10 to 12-year period, starting in late 1978 or early 1979 at twelve or more major federal penitentiaries in the five regions of the Canadian Penitentiary Service.

WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?

Previous training programs in federal penitentiaries have concentrated on teaching inmates specific vocational skills, while offering little information or practical experience on how to handle the tough and demanding environment of private industry.

How can inmates be expected to cope with time clocks, production schedules, quality control and profit margins when incarceration, with its ordered and structured life, takes most responsibilities away from them?

Even inmates with working experience in industry before their imprisonment have great difficulty in meeting these daily demands after long periods of incarceration. "An inmate may be well qualified as a plumber, carpenter or computer programmer," says Mr. R.J. Thompson, Director of Industries at Ottawa Headquarters. "But after years of incarceration, he has lost most of his work potential or has been unable to keep track of the on-going changes in his field.

Another major flaw in penitentiary industries is the incredible variety of products manufactured at present in institution workshops. From approximately 700, plans call for a reduction to about 100 kinds of products as the new factory concept is gradually adopted across the country in the 1980's. This will entail the closing of a number of workshops in most maximum and medium security institutions and will enable us to concentrate on the production of products to commercial, economical and profit-making levels.

THE PILOT PROJECT

The Joyceville Institution was selected for Phase One - the experimentation stage - for three major reasons: the existing industrial nature of the institution, with machinery and staff already present; the suitability of the site and the availability of both building and expansion space required for the new industry; and its proximity to Ottawa.

Opened in 1959, Joyceville is a medium-security institution located approximately 12 miles northeast of Kingston, 90 miles from Ottawa. This industrially-oriented penitentiary has an inmate population of approximately 400 and a staff of about 300.

Eighty inmates will be employed in the pilot factory, manufacturing metal products such as shelving, lockers, storage cabinets and lateral filing cabinets to fill orders from the Department of Supply and Services for federal government departments across the country.

Candidates for jobs will have to apply in the same manner as in private industry, and will have to meet the basic requirements set for each position. They will undergo a probationary period of approximately six weeks and promotion will depend upon performance, attitude, aptitude and, of course, opportunity for advancement.

The project will operate on a Monday-to-Friday work week. Workers will be paid up to the federal minimum wage.

The inmate worker will have to meet all the normal requirements for income tax, unemployment insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, etc. A scheme is also envisaged whereby inmates will have to contribute (percentage to be determined) from their salaries towards their own maintenance (room, board and clothing) and the maintenance of their families and other dependents. They will thus get accustomed to the responsibilities of managing their financial obligations.

Inmates will also have to face job insecurity. The ultimate disciplinary action will be dismissal and a return to the general inmate population. The hiring and firing of inmate employees will be determined by a three-man committee in the institution. Obviously, the assessment of the performance and attitudes of inmates working in the pilot plant will be tempered by the fact that the program, while operating as close as possible to commercial standards, is primarily designed as a training program to teach inmates how to work and maintain employment.

Inmates not involved, for whatever reason, in the new program will continue to be occupied in other areas, such as janitorial, maintenance, clothing and kitchen services; academic, vocational and trade classes; pre-release, self-employment, recreation and other penitentiary programs.

Initially, to provide a greater opportunity for evaluating the success or failure of inmates who have worked on the project to hold jobs in outside industry after their release, inmates serving long sentences may not qualify for the pilot factory. These inmates with longer sentences, however, could later qualify for work in the program when the evaluation study of the pilot is completed.

PROBLEMS AND ANSWERS

One of the earlier problems was the establishment of the project inmates' work day, within the restrictions imposed by the institution in its routine daily operation. An eight-hour work day. The inmates would start work at 8 a.m. and end their day at 4 p.m., with a one-hour lunch period. The normal working week will be from Monday to Friday, inclusive, except for standard government holidays; weekend and shift work are not considered at this time.

Interruptions will be kept to a minimum by scheduling as many penitentiary services as possible on evenings and weekends for project workers. For example, classification and sentence administration officers will be asked to conduct their interviews with inmate project workers at the end of the plant's work day. All hours away from work will have to be reported and recorded, with the possibility of salary deductions for lost time.

THE EVALUATION

The Joyceville Pilot Project will be thoroughly evaluated by the Faculty of Administrative Studies of York University in Toronto. The study will be conducted over a two-year period to assess the success and value of the pilot project to the inmate workers, both while working at the plant and later in maintaining employment on the outside after parole or release.

The National Parole Board is also expected to participate in the evaluation process, particularly in surveying inmates for and after release. Inmate reactions in terms of behavioural and attitudinal changes will also be studied. An interim evaluation report will be available after one year of operation and full evaluation will require approximately two years.

But how one could assess success? Will the project be acclaimed if only one worker is returned to society as a productive, responsible citizen? Is successful rehabilitation of every inmate invalued a criteria?

No matter how we judge the success of the project, do we have another choice but to try?

FACTS AND FIGURES - JOYCEVILLE PILOT PROJECT

OBJECTIVE: a) To accustom inmates to the working conditions prevailing in private industry;
b) To accustom them to assume their own financial responsibilities.

TARGET STARTING DATE: September 1976

COST: \$1.4 million

LOCATION: Joyceville Institution, medium-security Ontario penitentiary, with an inmate population of approximately 400.

NO. OF INMATES INVOLVED: About 80.

DURATION: Four years, with a built-in evaluation to be carried out by York University, Toronto in the initial two (2) years of this pilot project.

PRODUCTION: Metal products, i.e. storage cabinets, lockers, lateral filing cabinets, shelving and (as a future possibility) modular office furniture.

MARKET: Federal government departments, through D.S.S.

INMATE SALARIES: Up to the federal minimum hourly wage, with slightly lower salaries until project becomes self-supporting.

PROJECTED GROSS PRODUCTION: \$1 million in the first year

1.5 " " " second year

2 " " " third and fourth years

PROJECTED DEFICIT: \$184,000 in the first year

118,000 " " second year

2,000 " " third year

No profit or deficit in the fourth year.

END